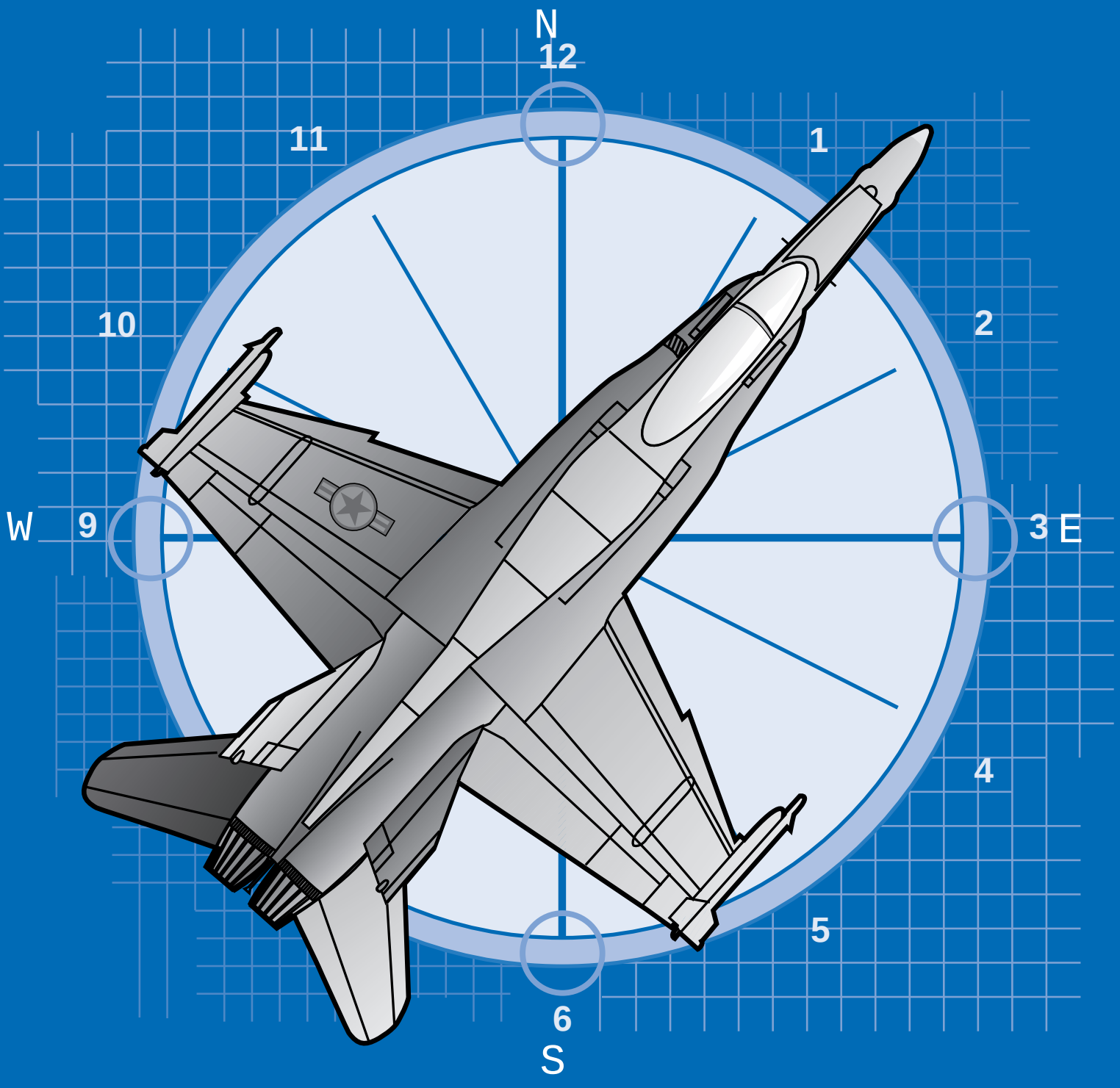
Performance Maintenance

DURING CONTINUOUS FLIGHT OPERATIONS



• A GUIDE FOR FLIGHT SURGEONS •

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PERFORMANCE MAINTENANCE
During Continuous Flight Operations

A GUIDE FOR AVIATORS, COMMANDERS, AND FLIGHT SURGEONS

Basic Principles

THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

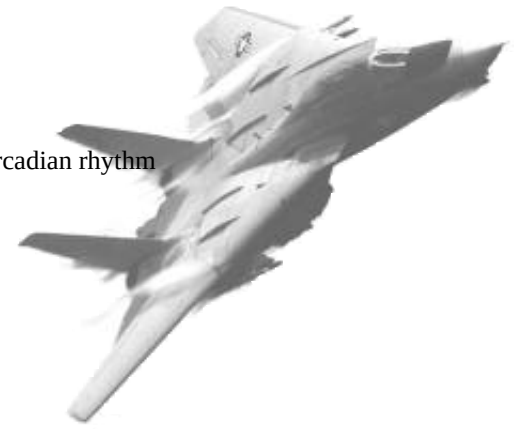
- **Aviators are normally tired before sustained operations begin (preload).**
- **Sleep cannot be stored or built up prior to continuous or sustained operations but preload can be reduced.**
- **Performance fluctuates predictably over the day (your circadian rhythm).**
- **Sleep loss, circadian rhythm disruption and hard work combine to produce fatigue.**
- **Fatigue is not due to lack of motivation or attitude.**
- **Poor performance is the ultimate price of fatigue in continuous operations.**
- **We manage maintenance, fuel and weapons; we can also manage fatigue.**

Continuous And Sustained Operations

TWO TYPES OF ACTIVITIES THAT TIRE AVIATORS

Operations that produce fatigue can be divided into two broad and sometimes overlapping categories:

Continous Operations (CONOPS)



– Extend over 24 hours at a "normal" rate
– Not necessarily longer hours per individual
– Workers are relieved at the end of a shift and return later
– Individual may work different hours which may conflict with the circadian rhythm
– Sleep may be intermittent, broken and unrestorative
– Most pilots use "CONOPS" to refer to contingency operations

Sustained Operations (SUSOPS)

– Involve individual continuous performance longer than 24 hours
– Work is continued until a goal is reached
– Sleep deprivation is common
– Prevalent in ground warfare

Tactical aviators most commonly participate in continuous operations with periods of sustained operations. Unlike a ground war aircraft availability and flight duration limit periods of duty. Back on deck, however, significant fatigue may be generated by planning, management responsibilities or lack of crew rest after returning from the last mission. The conduct of war has changed. Previously limited by daylight, around-the-clock preparation or actual combat is now the norm.

Paratroopers at Normandy participated in a sustained operation which resulted in debilitating fatigue and a remarkable decrease in their ability to perform:

> They were dull-eyed, bodily worn and too tired to think connectedly. Even a 30 minute flop on the turf with the stars for a blanket would have doubled the power of this body and quickened the minds of its leaders to ideas which they had blanked out. But no one thought to take that precaution. The United States Army is indifferent toward common-sense rules by which the energy of men may be conserved in combat....Said Captain Patch of his people on the far right, 'They were so beat that they could not understand words even if an order was clearly expressed. I was too tired to talk straight. Nothing I heard made a firm impression on me. I spoke jerkily in phrases because I could not remember the thoughts which had preceded what I said.' (1)

Sleep

MORE IS BETTER ... UP TO A POINT

- ❑ CO's, XO's, department heads and strike leaders will sleep far less than normal the week prior to the first strike because of the multiple demands of running the squadron, planning and flying.
- ❑ Sleep cannot be stored or built up but the preload of sleep loss can be reduced (2).
- ❑ Prior experience with sleep loss does not provide training to maintain performance.
- ❑ The minimum amount of sleep to maintain performance during sustained operations is 4-5 hours per day. Fragmented sleep is less effective (2).
- ❑ Many studies indicate the important factor is the total amount of sleep, not the amount in a specific sleep cycle. The body tends to adjust for the stage of sleep if given enough time for sleep (2).
- ❑ Resting on a bed is not the same as sleep. For some unknown reasons, the regenerative properties associated with sleep cannot be accomplished by just rest (2).
- ❑ Combat naps of 10 minutes or more will help maintain alertness and job performance. There is some risk from "sleep inertia" lasting about 5 minutes after awakening characterized by confusion, sluggishness and uncoordination (3).
- ❑ "Non-habitual nappers" experience sleep inertia more frequently. Taking more naps (practicing) appears to reduce this problem (4).
- ❑ It is easiest to initiate sleep twice a day; in the early afternoon and just before the normal sleep time.
- ❑ Alcohol, while initially relaxing, significantly worsens the duration and quality of sleep.

THE COMBAT NAP

Conventional wisdom suggests that the combat nap is sought by junior officers as a means of avoiding the executive officer. From the standpoint of performance maintenance, however, it is probably the most useful tool we have during continuous and sustained operations. Unlike other interventions, sleep reduces fatigue itself. In other words, it treats the problem not the symptom. Research suggests that a period of sleep as short as 10 minutes improves objective functioning. The only drawback to the nap is that some individuals awaken disoriented and lethargic which lasts from 5 to 20 minutes. "Practice" naps may reduce this period of sleep inertia.

It is strongly recommended that commands encourage, and at times mandate, combat naps.

- ❑ Sleeping more than 10 hours may cause "sleep drunkenness" and should be discouraged, even after a period of sleep deprivation (2).
- ❑ Caffeine interferes with sleep. During Desert Storm aviators who drank less caffeine on non-flying days took longer naps (5).

Circadian Rhythms

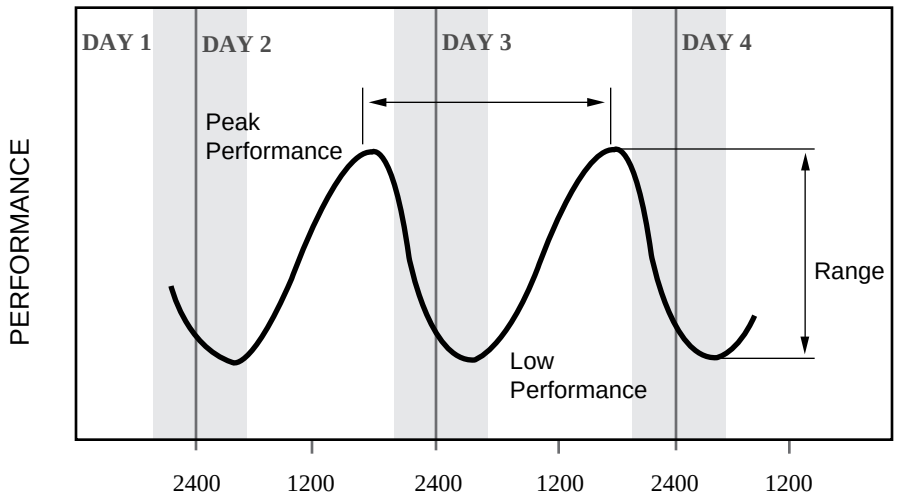
EARLY MORNING IS THE HARDEST TIME

There are numerous cyclic body rhythms in man that collectively are described as circadian rhythms. The influence of the circadian rhythm on aviator performance during continuous operations can be dramatic and warrants both appreciation and understanding.

Experiments carried out in isolation (where all environmental cues have been removed) place humans on a free-wheeling cycle resulting in a spontaneous period commonly close to 25 hours. Entraining agents, however, reset the biological clock daily. These include light and darkness (the most powerful cues), sleep, meals, social activities and clocks.

A general rule is that your body will adapt 1.5 hours/day when traveling east and 1.0 hours/day when traveling west (6). This does not mean that a person cannot perform before all his/her systems are locked on; just that the performance will not be maximized.

THE CIRCADIAN CYCLE



Desynchronization occurs when internal rhythms are no longer in tune with external cues or each other. Continuous operations, transmeridian travel (jet lag) and sleep deprivation (as found in SUSOPS) all force the rhythmic systems of the body to re-adapt.

Systems shift their phases at different rates and therefore may not only be out of phase with local time (external desynchronization) but also out of phase with each other (internal desynchronization). Some phases will be phase delayed and others phase advanced. Finally, there are substantial individual differences. For example, extroverts tend to readjust faster than introverts and individuals over age 40 take more time to readjust than the same person would at age 20. People who live on a more regimented schedule appear to have an easier time adjusting than a person who eats, sleeps, etc. when he or she feels like it. Fortunately, the military aviator is normally younger and tends toward regimentation and extroversion.

On an average circadian cycle, performance peaks between 1200 and 2100 hours (normally around 1600) and falls to a minimum between 0300 and 0600 hours. Many body rhythms are tied to sleep rather than the temperature cycle and by disrupting sleep these other cycles are also affected.

About seven consecutive days of shift work are required to adjust the body temperature cycle (and the associated performance peaks and valleys). A single period of night work is more easily tolerated than three or four consecutive nights (which starts the process of circadian desynchronization) (7).

Continuous and sustained operations are prime culprits in causing circadian desynchronization. The resultant fatigue can be more difficult to manage as the body is now challenged both internally and externally. This is known as “operational fatigue.”

Fatigue

EASY TO UNDERSTAND BUT DIFFICULT TO DEFINE

Fatigue is something we all have experienced in varying degrees. Unfortunatley, given its multi-faceted nature, a clear and concise definition remains elusive. We will therefore discuss some of the qualities of fatigue as described by Krueger (8) and offer three working definitions applicable in the military setting.

Physical fatigue is the temporary loss of the power of muscles (or sensors) to respond. Mental fatigue includes the subjective feeling of weariness followed by worsening performance of cognitive tasks.

One characteristic of mental fatigue is "an aversion to effort." During prolonged difficult tasks Krueger describes how "...we often see fatigued workers suddenly stop their work, be it physical or cognitive, and vigorously participate in sporting activities, or computer games during 'break'."

Also seen are occasional periods of no response to stimulation but with normal functioning between. This has been described as the "lapse hypothesis" and while not fully understood, explains why vigilance and attention are early casualties of fatigue.

The subjective sense of fatigue is the first indicator that people are getting tired. In a normally close knit squadron interpersonal dynamics, in particular everyone's sense of humor, may be the first thing to change. As a management tool this can be a useful hint for the commanding officer.

TYPES OF FATIGUE

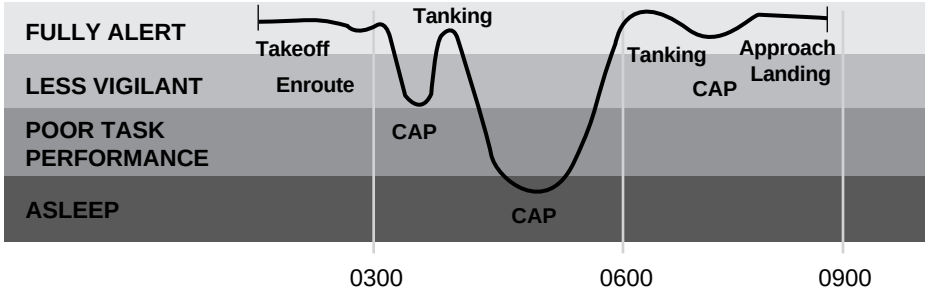
Working definitions which provide a starting point in the operational setting:

ACUTE
- produced by physical exertion or sleep loss
- alleviated by a single rest or sleep period

CHRONIC
- depression or "chronic fatigue syndrome"
- a medical or psychological problem

OPERATIONAL
- attributed to physiological as well as psychological factors
- sleep loss and circadian desynchronization are prime culprits
- the type of fatigue produce by continuous operations
- most commonly seen after 3-4 days of heavy tasking
- not relieved by a single sleep period

FIGURE 1 – PERFORMANCE EFFECTS OF FATIGUE
An Already Tired Aviator Flying an Uneventful Seven Hour Combat Air Patrol (CAP)



Performance

FOR THE MILITARY AVIATOR PERFORMANCE IS THE BOTTOM LINE

Poor performance is the cost of fatigue. At the extreme is disorientation, overwhelming sleepiness and inability to give and receive orders as described during the Normandy operation of WWII. It would be unusual for the tactical aviator to ever get to this point. More likely is that some intermediate level of fatigue and compromised performance will occur.

It is not possible to give a single value or quantity to describe how performance degrades as a result of fatigue. There is no physiologic equivalent to a fuel state or energy on an airframe. The many things that must be considered include: the type of task, preload of fatigue, time of day (circadian effects) and state of arousal.

FOUR DETERMINANTS OF PERFORMANCE

TYPE OF TASK – Takeoff and landing skills are more fatigue resistant than maintaining vigilance

PRELOAD – How tired you were when you started

TIME OF DAY – Performance is best 1200 to 2100 and at a low 0300 to 0600

AROUSAL – What is happening during the flight.

All things being equal you will be more awake flying through AAA than flying circles in the tanker pattern.

Fatigue affects different capabilities at different rates. From most to least sensitive these would generally include: (1) subjective sense of well being, (2) vigilance and attention, (3) judgement and decision making, (4) complex intellectual or physical tasks, and finally, (5) well learned/simple intellectual or physical tasks. Staying awake is sometimes the most important job occurring in an airplane. Sleeping is the ultimate failure of performance.

The basic skills of flying an airplane are extremely fatigue resistant. Several studies illustrate this point. Carrier landing during Vietnam actually improved at night after 22 days of combat flying and only slightly worsened during the day (9,10). Likewise LSO scores in Desert Shield/Storm aboard the USS AMERICA remained the same or improved as operations progressed (11). The Army studied three two-man crews who flew a helicopter simulator for 14 hours a day for 4 days and 10 hours on the 5th day while sleeping four hours each night. Cognitive and judgmental errors were made, but pilots flew well into the 5th day (12). Interestingly, flight surgeons deemed the aviators unsafe to fly after the third night. Copilots were noted to increasingly fall asleep due to the boring nature of their duties.

Preload of fatigue is a concept not commonly studied in the laboratory but is extremely valuable when trying to predict how well an aviator will do on a given mission. It is all too easy to focus entirely on what the aviator is about to do and not consider what his schedule was for the past week.

Circadian effects are also important as we previously discussed. The most fatigue sensitive skills (vigilance/attention) are particularly vulnerable to circadian effects.

Different phases of flight have widely varying levels of arousal. Boring aspects might include flying a tanker, helicopter or E-2 on station for several hours, an uneventful combat air patrol, the transit back from a long range strike or holding in the marshal pattern prior to landing. Tasks with high arousal would include bombing a target with the enemy shooting back, engaging a fighter or simply taking-off or landing. We can predict that performance in situations with inherent arousal will be much better than those that are boring.

The most likely scenario to produce significant compromise in performance includes an already tired aviator flying between 0300-0600 on an uneventful mission that involves low tasking (no arousal). An example is a seven hour CAP (Combat Air Patrol) mission as shown in figure 1.

Anti-Fatigue Medications

WHILE NOT A SUBSTITUTE FOR WISE MANAGEMENT THERE ARE TIMES TO CONSIDER THIS TYPE OF INTERVENTION

Performance Maintenance Vice Enhancement

An unpleasant image frequently comes to mind when the topic of anti-fatigue medications and aviators is raised. This is of an exhausted pilot who is too tired to fly but is given a high dose of stimulant and repeatedly launched into combat with the expectation that he will perform better than ever before. Although suffering insomnia and other side-effects from the stimulant this is overcome by repeated use of sedatives.

This unfortunate scenario represents the extreme of an attempt at "performance enhancement." While limited enhancement may be achievable in the future the appropriate use of anti-fatigue medications today is in the role of "performance maintenance." Aviators already fly extremely well; the challenge is to identify when fatigue causes periods of degraded performance and then intervene only to maintain an existing level of capability. This intervention would take the form of helping the aviator sleep (thus preventing fatigue) or keeping him awake and alert during the low task phase of a mission.

Non-Pharmacologic Strategies

The use of non-pharmacologic strategies prior to using any medication is essential. This includes deferral of routine non-flying duties, flexible scheduling, and use of frequent naps. "Strategies and Ideas" on page 12 contains specific suggestions for the airwing, squadron, individual aviator and flight surgeon.

History

The use of medications to maintain performance in aviators is not a new idea. During the Falklands conflict sedatives were used by the British to regulate sleep for pilots (13,14). Amphetamines were used by the British (15) and Germans (16) in WWII . During Vietnam both the Air Force and Navy made amphetamines available to aviators. Intermittently since Vietnam up through Desert Storm the Air Force has used both amphetamines and sedatives in selected aircraft for specific missions (17). While not used for performance maintenance, dextro-amphetamine (dexedrine) was administered frequently in combination with scopalomine to combat motion sickness during primary Navy flight training.

Stimulants To Maintain Alertness

Amphetamines have both central and peripheral actions. In the CNS they are a powerful sympathomimetic amine and serve to increase alertness, focus attention, elevate mood, decrease appetite, and improve concentration. Peripherally, both systolic and diastolic blood pressure will be raised with a reflex decrease in heart rate. Dextro-amphetamine shows strong central and peripheral effects while methamphetamine has less peripheral action.

At low dosages amphetamines primarily increase alertness with significant side effects only beginning as the doses are increased. Well rested subjects evaluated in the laboratory showed that 5 mg of dexedrine counteracted small performance decrements caused by scopolamine (18). An intermittent low dose regimen, therefore, has the capability of maintaining aviator performance yet avoiding undesired medication effects. This consistent with reports from USAF pilots during Desert Storm that 5 mgs of dexedrine helped maintain alertness without causing other changes in mood or perception (19).

Caffeine is also effective at reversing some of the effects of fatigue. It compares favorably to amphetamine in improving cognitive performance but is less effective in maintaining alertness (20). Based purely on efficacy, it is a second choice to amphetamine. Due to its low abuse potential and wide availability, however, caffeine still offers significant utility (especially in ground personnel). Caffeine was used successfully during flights over Iraq supporting Operation Southern Watch in August 1992 (21).

Sleep Initiators

Benzodiazepines produce the "most natural" quality of sleep and are therefore good candidates for sleep initiators. Two significant medication effects are seen: drowsiness (the desired hypnotic action) and amnesia of events while a therapeutic dose is present (anterograde amnesia).

The most significant drawback to benzodiazepines is anterograde amnesia. For the military aviator this raises the possibility of taking the medication, going to a

brief, taking-off and then not remembering what he was told to do. A period of restriction from flight planning, briefing or flying is therefore appropriate following use of benzodiazepines. The recommendation for temazepam (Restoril) is seven hours and is derived from two primary sources. A single laboratory study of a 15 mg dose of temazepam found neither hangover nor amnesia seven hours later (22). Additionally, experience in Desert Storm did not reveal adverse reports from aircrew who flew six to eight hours after using tempazepam (19). A 30 mg dose does not necessarily produce better sleep and has a higher incidence of hangover effect and amnesia (22).

Unfortunately, the demands of strike planning and other non-flying duties may preclude a seven hour restriction from duty. Diphenhydramine (Benadryl) is an alternated as it allows for a four to six hour period of grounding (23). This will enhance operational flexibility during contingency operations and other short fused situations. An aviator can return to duty four hours after a 25 mg dose of diphenhydramine or six hours after 50 mgs. For a 50 mg dose objective performance decrement lasts only two hours but subjective drowsiness lasts for six hours. The quality of sleep is reported to be poorer with antihistamines.

Repetitive Dosing

The risk of drug accumulation from repetitive dosing warrants serious consideration. One pharmacologic rule of thumb suggests that to avoid accumulation dosages need to be repeated at an interval no less than four times the half-live. The maximum acceptable half-life for a medication used daily for extended periods, therefore, is about six hours. The half-lives of the active components or metabolites for d-amphetamine is about ten hours, methamphetaime ten hours, temazepam ten hours and diphenhydramine four hours.

Variability in the half life and metabolism of benzodiazepines and amphetamines is related to the volume of distribution, body fat, drug lipophilicity, and drug elimination. Half life of benzodiazepines is lower in young men because of larger body volume, lower body fat, and active drug elimination. Significant variations in half life is not expected in the population of military aviators.

Stimulant Side Effects And Adverse Reactions

Undesired side effects from amphetamine use potentially include increased sleep latency, anorexia, euphoria, hypertension, idiosyncratic reactions, cyclic use of a stimulant/sedative combination to maintain performance or outright abuse (24). These symptoms are primarily dose related and are not expected with 5-10 mgs of dextro-amphetamine or methamphetamine. Insomnia is possible if aircrew use the medication within two hours of landing but this can be avoided with appropriate education and training . Idiosyncratic reactions are rare, and should be detected during pretesting. Finally, abuse is possible but felt to be unlikely given the professional nature of aviators, the limited and well defined circumstances within which these medications will be used, and by close aeromedical supervision.

No formal records are available from the use of the scopolamine-dexedrine combination for motion sickness by the Navy training command. Many years of use, however, did not generate reports of adverse reactions or abuse.

Medication Interactions

Interactions with Chemical Warfare (CW) treatment medications (pyridostigmine, atropine and 2-PAM Chloride) and amphetamines or benzodiazepines are not described by the Drug Therapy Screening System (MICROMEDEX). Caffeine may aggravate arrythmias particularly if used with amphetamines. Benzodiazepines will interact with other CNS depressants, such as alcohol, opiates and antihistamines (diphenhydramine). Temazepam and diphenhydramine should not be taken together.

Importance of Self-Regulation

The delegation of responsibility for use of these medications to the individual aviator, with close follow-up by the flight surgeon is extremely important. This principle was strongly emphasized by the Air Force during Desert Storm. If the operational tempo is intense enough to generate significant fatigue, then an overly restrictive medication protocol will probably lose its utility due to lack of flexibility. Aviators, by their nature, are efficient at using tools given to them to achieve specific goals. Anti-fatigue medications are no exception.

Although significant responsibility is delegated to the aviator the amount of medication issued at one time should be limited to what is needed for one or two flights. This allows the flight surgeon to remain closely involved and limits the potential for misuse of the medication either on a one time or recurring basis.

Aircrew Briefings

As the final decision to use stimulants or sedatives is delegated to the aviator his understanding becomes key to the success of the protocol. The need for a quality briefing by the flight surgeon with regular follow-up for advice cannot be overemphasized.

USAF Experience in Desert Storm

AN IN-DEPTH LOOK AT ONE SUCCESSFUL SQUADRON

Background

Stimulant medications (dexedrine 5 mg or recently caffeine 200 mg) were first used in SAC in 1960 and TAC in 1962. While no formal data gathering was done no problems with these stimulants or sedatives are reported. Recently SAC did not use stimulants but authorized temazepam in single/dual seat aircraft. Following Desert Storm an anonymous survey of deployed fighter pilots was completed. 464 surveys were returned (43%). For Desert Storm: 57% used stimulants at some time (17% routinely, 58% occasionally, 25% only once). Within individual units, usage varied from 3% to 96%, with higher usage in units tasked for sustained combat air patrol (CAP) missions. Sixty one percent of those who used stimulants reported them essential to mission accomplishment (17).

F-15 Squadron's Experience (19)

This squadron deployed flying to Saudi Arabia as part of Desert Shield with TRANSPAC flights lasting up to 16 hours non-stop. During Desert Storm they flew approximately 7000 hours in 1200 sorties using a pool of 35 pilots and shot down a total of 16 MiG aircraft. It is notable that the squadron had the fewest pilots assigned yet flew more flight hours and shot down more aircraft than any other F-15 squadron in-theater.

Implementation of Anti-Fatigue Medications

Squadron pilots were briefed clearly and completely on the characteristics, recommended dosing, and intended use for both stimulant and sedative medication. Medication, once issued, was considered to "belong to the pilot." The policy of the commanding officer was that all pilots would always fly with stimulant medication available, however, the decision to use it was left to the individual.

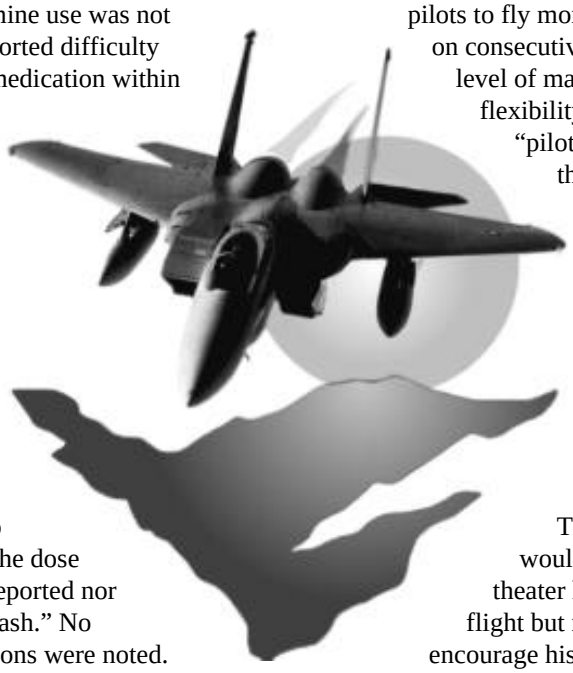
The stimulant, described as the "go-pill", was 5 mg Dexedrine (dextro-amphetamine). The recommended dose was one or two taken orally every four hours. As there is a 45-60 minute delay in onset of effect for the stimulant it was recommended that they use it when the early symptoms of fatigue appeared. They were then given four to six Dexedrine tablets which were replaced as needed. In practice most aviators used a 5 mg dose, repeating it every two to three hours. While some took the go-pill outbound on missions with the thought that it would act as a performance enhancer the majority used the medication in the early morning hours or just after sunrise during extended combat air patrol (CAP) missions. If there was enemy activity staying alert was not a problem. For long periods during the war, however, the missions involved flying to a CAP station, circling, then returning to base for seven hours of uneventful flight time.

The sedative was 15 or 30 mg of Restoril (temazepam) used as an aide for sleep and was called the "no-go" pill. While a 12 hour period of grounding was recommended pilots used this medication and began flight planning within six to eight hours without reporting any adverse effects, including amnesia or "hangover" effect. The no-go pill was used less frequently than the go pill. While based on an extremely limited and subjective sample, it appeared that the younger aviators favored the go-pills and the older ones the no-go pills.

Medication use was approved by the commanding officer who was regularly kept apprised by the flight surgeon. Medication was carried personally by the flight surgeon as the pilots were too busy flying or planning to routinely come to sickbay. Additional pills were dispensed as needed with amounts recorded in a small logbook. Frequent visits to the scheduling office and his presence most of the time in the squadron office allowed him to know the aviators' schedules and keep track of individual tasking.

Concerns and Adverse Effects
A number of pilots used more medication than the flight surgeon thought they needed at the time. When the tasking went down, however, their behavior changed and medication use stopped. He has not worried about anyone since and now feels that there was no abuse of either drug, just individual differences.

Insomnia following amphetamine use was not normally seen. Two pilots reported difficulty sleeping when they used the medication within an hour or so of landing. This was due to poor planning or in one case recall of the mission. Pilots quickly learned the characteristics of the stimulant and used it efficiently.



When Restoril was used for insomnia it was usually as a result of work/combat tasking. Cyclic used of stimulants and sedatives in combination was not seen. No tolerance or need to increase the dose of stimulant or sedative was reported nor was there a post-stimulant "crash." No adverse or idiosyncratic reactions were noted. While weight loss was common during the war it was not felt to be due to amphetamine induced anorexia. No one reported a reduction in G tolerance. One pilot did report that amphetamine significantly reduced or eliminated the onset of spatial disorientation during aerial refueling at night in bad weather.

Squadron Flight Surgeon Comments
In summary, he felt that both Dexedrine and Restoril were extremely valuable medications during the war. He strongly supports their continued availability for future use as needed.

Squadron Pilots Comments
Individual opinions of the pilots interviewed were either positive or neutral. None expressed a negative opinion regarding the availability or use of either drug. Several members were adamant that the squadron could not have maintained its level of flight operations without the medications they used. Those who didn't see any personal benefit still endorsed having it available for others in the squadron.

Operations Officer's Comments (Navy Exective Officer Equivalent)
The OPSO felt that given the schedule flown the squadron had the potential for "five to ten accidents" yet none occurred. During some 24 hour periods crews were airborne for thirteen to fourteen hours with a maximum of six to eight hours off before the next days flying began. An attempt was made to schedule pilots to fly morning, afternoon then night flight on consecutive days to reduce fatigue. The level of manning did not allow as much flexibility as desired. Overall, he felt that "pilots do not like to take drugs" but that in reference to these medications the squadron "just had to have it."

Commanding Officer's Comments
The commanding officer required all pilots to carry Dexedrine on every flight. Personally, he only used the stimulant during the TRANSPAC when he felt he would have fallen asleep. While in-theater he carried the go-pills on every flight but never took any. He didn't encourage his pilot's to use the medication but considered it a safety-of flight issue. If they didn't need anything he discouraged its use. He was not aware of any abuse or a "run on the pharmacy." Prior to approving use he discussed the issue with the wing commander who also carried the medication in the airplane.

In his opinion, the main benefit of the medications was to increase or maintain the margin of safety during extremely heavy flight operations. He stated that the level of tasking was not increased based on the use of any medications. When asked about squadron manning he said that 1.25 pilots/aircraft was about right given the normal peacetime funding for training but needed to be increased for combat operations.

His comments on supervision of the aircrew included that "you must give them guidelines and then let them self-regulate. If you can't trust them with the medication then you can't trust them with a 50 million dollar airplane to try and go kill someone."

Strategies and Ideas

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE AIR WING, SQUADRON, INDIVIDUAL AND FLIGHT SURGEON

AIR WING LEVEL:

- ❑ Fatigue is a commodity to be managed. This policy/attitude must be established by the air wing commander.
- ❑ Everyone else's resistance to fatigue will rarely be the same as the air wing commander's.
- ❑ Recognize that planning/ground duties fatigue CO's/XO's and department heads prior to the first strike.
- ❑ Minimize unnecessary changes in tasking (weaponeering, rules of engagement, etc.). The cost is lost sleep.
- ❑ Task squadrons/units so they can minimize circadian disruption (allow day or night specialization).
- ❑ Expand facilities support when needed. Examples include longer food service hours, an additional sickcall or augmented base transportation.
- ❑ Optimize sleeping quarters for sleeping (sometimes hard to do). A noisy room is bad, a hot one is worse (make the base or ship fix the A/C).

SQUADRON LEVEL:

- ❑ Fatigue is a commodity to be managed. This policy/attitude must be established by the commanding officer.
- ❑ Preparation/planning for a strike may be harder than the strike itself; don't make it harder than it needs to be.
- ❑ Four to five hours of sleep per night is the minimum required for indefinite sustained operations.
- ❑ A change in squadron dynamics, such as losing a sense of humor, is an early and reliable indicator of fatigue.
- ❑ Kick people out of the ready room and send them to bed; encourage combat naps.
- ❑ It is harder to sleep at mid-day than at 0300; schedule a longer block of time for rest during the day.
- ❑ It takes about seven days to adjust to working nights. Working only three to four nights in a row starts the process of circadian desynchronization but doesn't complete the shift. Therefore, working a single night or seven in a row is better tolerated.
- ❑ Bright lights not only maintain alertness but are a strong factor in accelerating circadian adaptation.
- ❑ Establish "grounding" guidelines for both overly fatigued aircrew and ground support personnel.
- ❑ Let the senior enlisted do the paperwork.
- ❑ Use your flight surgeon.

INDIVIDUAL LEVEL:

- ❑ Decide early to "manage" yourself.
- ❑ Be honest about your limitations; no one can sprint 26 miles.
- ❑ Pay attention to nutrition, hydration and physical conditioning.
- ❑ Exercise sleep discipline; unless it is really important go to bed.
- ❑ Combat naps work (even as short as 10 minutes).
- ❑ Many people are sluggish and confused for five to twenty minutes after taking a nap. This could be a problem when manning an alert aircraft.
- ❑ Ten hours is the maximum effective sleep period (even when sleep deprived).
- ❑ During the day it is easiest to get to sleep just after lunchtime (whether you ate or not).
- ❑ Caffeine works well to keep you awake – so remember to stop drinking coffee several hours before you want to sleep.
- ❑ Consider raising the B.S. flag if you need too.

FLIGHT SURGEON UTILIZATION:

- ❑ The squadron flight surgeon (FS) can be of great value during Continuous Operations and SUSOPS. The FS's familiarity with squadron members and knowledge of the signs and symptoms of fatigue place him in a unique position to assist the squadron.
- ❑ Consider the FS in planning/scheduling/briefing; he may think of things you didn't and can be a good conscience.
- ❑ The FS can be a problem solver by improving the sleep and work areas and general facilities support.
- ❑ The FS can provide the aircrew an "out." An aviator can save face by having his FS ground him verses having to go to the OPSO and admitting that he is too fatigued to fly.
- ❑ Anti-fatigue medications are an additional augment that the FS can provide should operational necessity demand it.

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Performance Maintenance During Continuous Flight Operations 15

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Briefing Materials

TEACHING THE INDIVIDUAL AVIATOR ABOUT PERFORMANCE MAINTENANCE IS ESSENTIAL

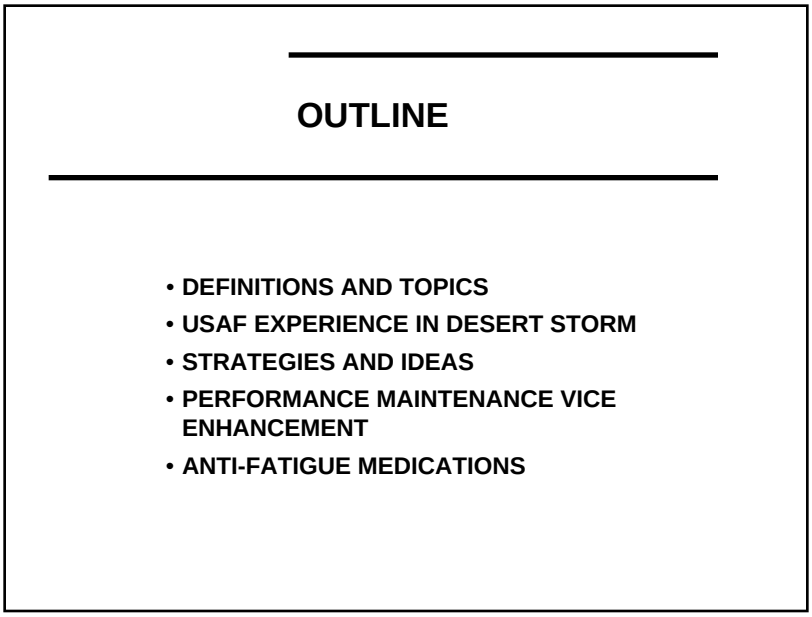
The following briefing materials can easily be made into overhead transparencies for squadron presentations. On the reverse of each slide are accompanying notes that explain each "bullet."

Simply reading directly from the notes is not recommended. Instead, study the ***Guide for Flight Surgeons*** and use the notes for preparation and as a memory jogger during your presentation.

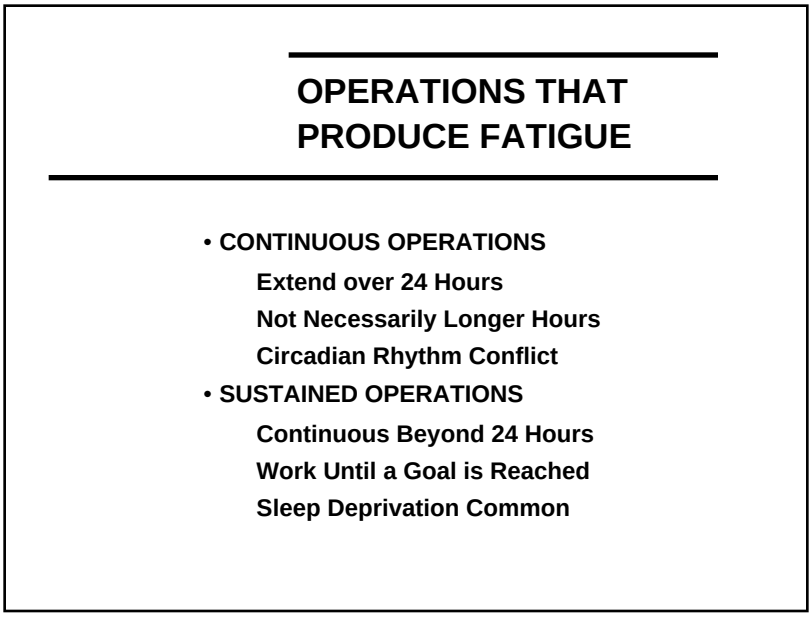
On average, one to one and a half minutes should be spent per slide making the entire presentation 17-25 minutes long. Slides may be deleted or extra ones added as required. Remember, your credibility is determined not only by what you say but how you say it.

PERFORMANCE MAINTENANCE
DURING
CONTINUOUS FLIGHT OPERATIONS

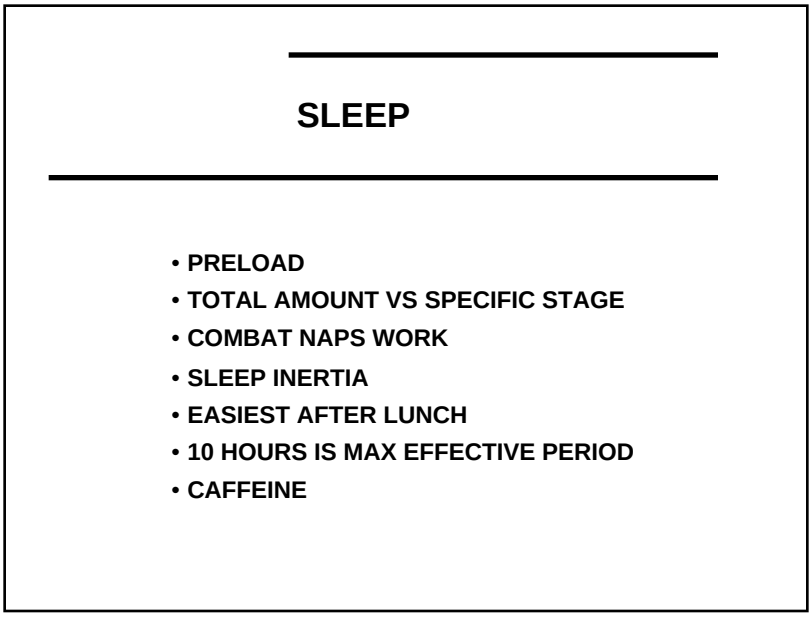
- Introduce yourself.
- Introduce the topic.



- As we talk about performance maintenance we will first cover some background on the topic and then the specifics of what we can do to overcome the effects of fatigue.
- First are **definitions** of sustained and continuous operations followed by the **topics** of sleep, circadian rhythms, fatigue and how fatigue affects performance.
- Next is a look at a particularly successful **Air Force** F-15 squadron during Desert Storm who had the high score of 16 Mig kills for the war.
- Getting more specific, we will discuss **strategies and ideas** that can be used by the airwing, squadron and individual in the face of fatigue.
- Lastly, we will address the important difference between what we call **performance maintenance and performance enhancement** and how these concepts relate to the use of **anti-fatigue** medications.



- Operations that produce fatigue can be divided into two broad categories:
- **CONTINUOUS OPERATIONS** (CONOPS)
    - **Extend over 24 hours** at a “normal” rate
    - **Not necessarily longer hours** per individual
    - Workers are relieved at the end of a shift and return later
    - Individual may work different hours which may **conflict with the circadian rhythm**
    - Sleep may be intermittent and broken which is less efficient
    - Obviously, "CONOPS" also refers to contingency operations
- **SUSTAINED OPERATIONS** (SUSOPS)
    - Work is continued **beyond 24 hours**
    - You **work until a goal is reached**
    - **Sleep deprivation is common**
    - Prevalent in ground warfare
    - Involve individual continuous performance longer than 24 hours
- Tactical aviators most commonly participate is continuous operations with periods of sustained operations. Unlike a ground war, aircraft availability and flight duration limit periods of duty. Back on deck, however, significant fatigue may be generated by planning, management responsibilities or lack of crew rest after returning from the last mission. The nature of war has changed. Previously limited by daylight, around-the-clock preparation and/or actual combat is now the norm.

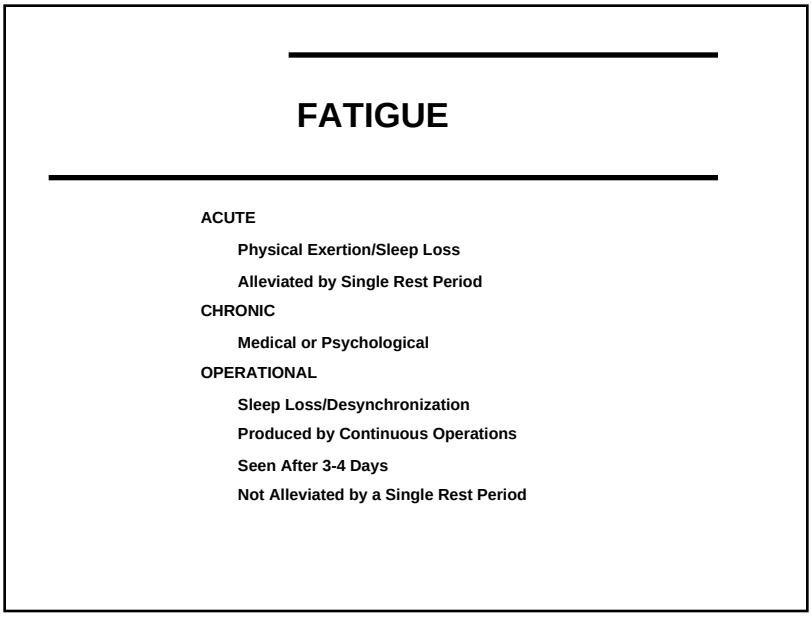


- Sleep is what keeps us from getting fatigued or fixes the problem once we are tired.
- It is easy to forget that the majority of our sleep loss occurs prior to climbing into the airplane. This is called **preload**.
- Many studies indicate the important factor is **total amount of sleep**, not the amount in a specific sleep cycle. The body tends to adjust for the stage of sleep if given enough time for sleep.
- Conventional wisdom suggests that the **combat nap** is sought by junior officers as a means of avoiding the executive officer. From the standpoint of performance maintenance, however, it is probably the most useful tool we have during continuous and sustained operations. Unlike other interventions, sleep reduces fatigue itself. In other words, it treats the problem not the symptom. Research suggests that a period of sleep as short as 10 minutes improves objective functioning.
- The only drawback to the nap is that some individuals awaken disoriented and lethargic which lasts from 5 to 20 minutes. "Practice" naps may reduce this period of **sleep inertia**.
- It is easiest to initiate sleep twice a day; in the early afternoon **just after lunch** (whether you ate or not) and just before the normal sleep time.
- **Sleeping more than 10 hours** may cause “sleep drunkenness” and should be discouraged, even after a period of sleep deprivation.
- **Caffeine** interferes with sleep. During Desert Storm aviators who drank less caffeine on non-flying days took longer naps.

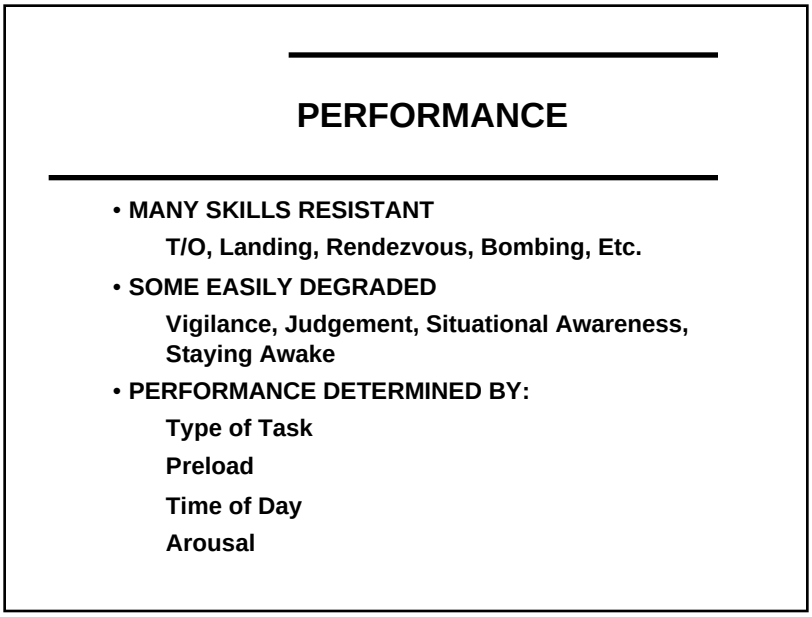
CIRCADIAN RHYTHMS

- **NUMEROUS CYCLIC RHYTHMS**
- **DESYNCHRONIZATION**
  - **External**
  - **Internal**
- **PERFORMANCE**
  - **Best 1200-2100**
  - **Worst 0300-0600**
- **7 DAYS TO ADJUST**

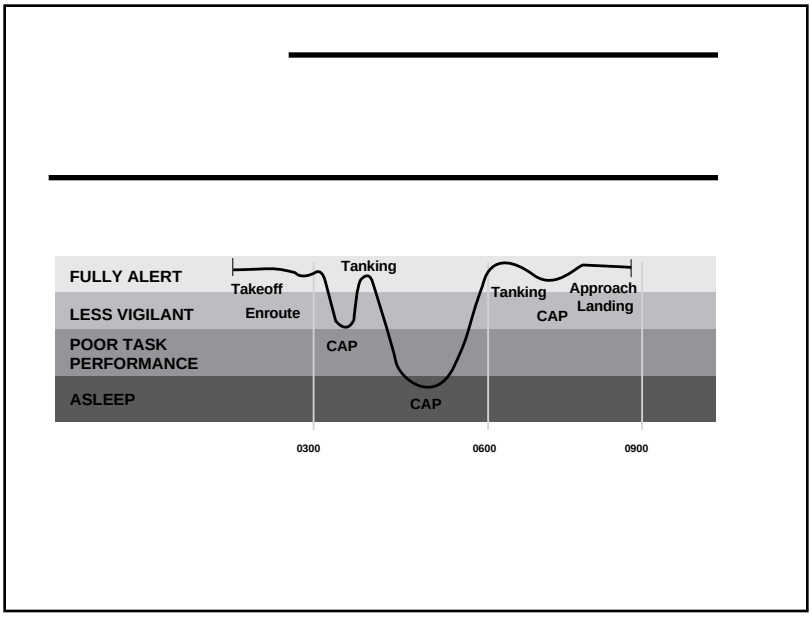
- There are **numerous cyclic body rhythms** in man that collectively are described as circadian rhythms. The influence of the circadian rhythm on aviator performance during continuous operations can be dramatic and warrants both appreciation and understanding.
- **Desynchronization** occurs when internal rhythms are no longer in tune with external cues or each other. Continuous operations, transmeridian travel (jet lag), and sleep deprivation (as found in SUSOPS) all force the rhythmic systems of the body re-adapt. Systems shift their phases at different rates and therefore may not only be out of phase with local time (**external desynchronization**) but also out of phase with each other (**internal desynchronization**).
- On an average circadian cycle, **performance peaks between 1200 and 2100 hours** (normally around 1600) and falls to a **minimum between 0300 and 0600 hours**. Many body rhythms are controlled by sleep. When we disrupt sleep these other cycles are also affected.
- About **seven consecutive days** of shift work are required to adjust the body temperature cycle (and the associated performance peaks and valleys). A single period of night work is easily tolerated while 3 or 4 consecutive nights starts the process of circadian desynchronization.



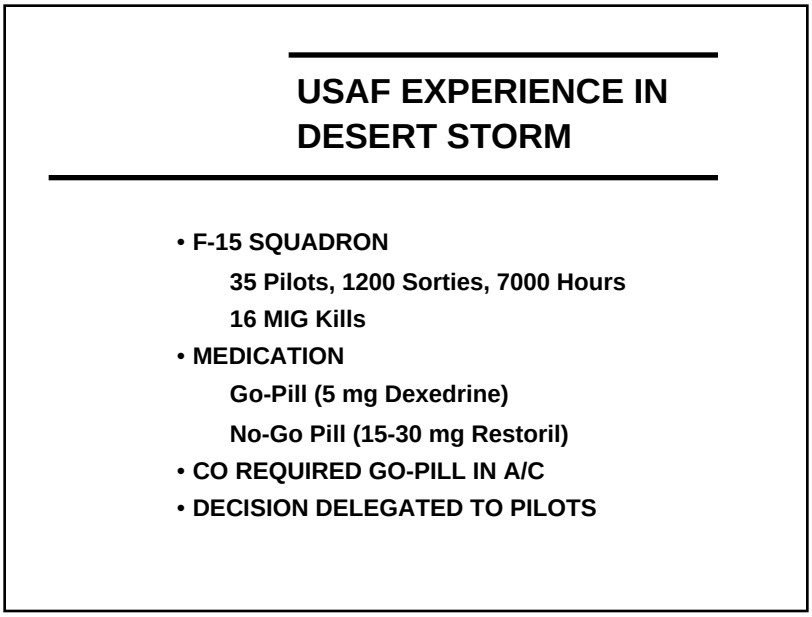
- Physical fatigue is the temporary loss of the power of muscles (or sensors) to respond. Mental fatigue includes the subjective feeling of weariness followed by worsening performance of cognitive (thinking) tasks.
- Working definitions of different types of fatigue provide us a starting point in the operational setting:
- **ACUTE**
    - **produced by physical exertion or sleep loss**
    - **alleviated by a single rest or sleep period**
- **CHRONIC**
    - **depression or "chronic fatigue syndrome"**
    - **a medical or psychological problem**
- **OPERATIONAL**
    - **sleep loss and circadian desynchronization are prime culprits**
    - **the type of fatigue produce by continuous operations**
    - **most commonly seen after 3-4 days of heavy tasking**
    - **not relieved by a single sleep period**



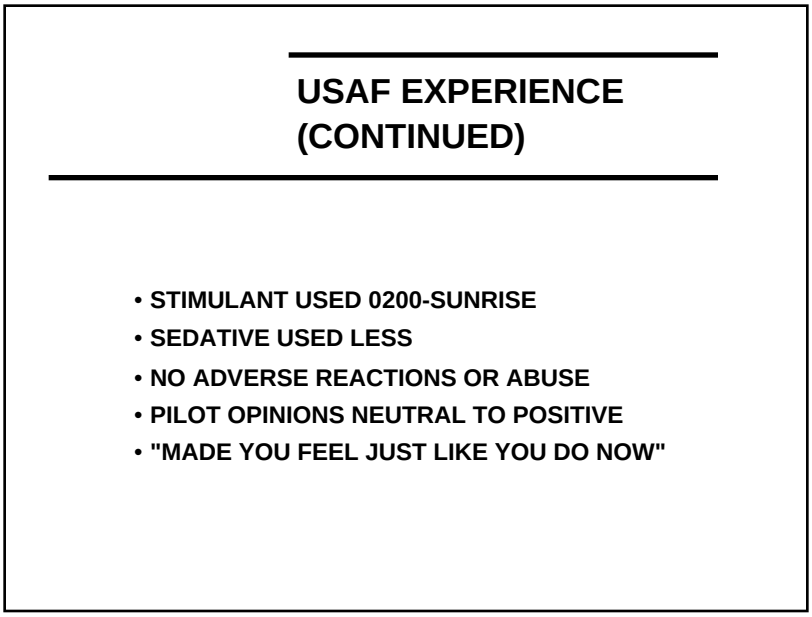
- Poor performance is the cost of fatigue. For the military aviator, performance is the bottom line. Unfortunately, it is not possible to give a single value or quantity to how performance degrades as a result of fatigue. There is no simple physiologic equivalent to a fuel state
- The **basic skills of flying an airplane are extremely fatigue resistant**. Several studies illustrate this point. Carrier landing during Vietnam actually improved at night after 22 days of combat flying and only slightly worsened during the day. Likewise LSO scores in Desert Shield/Storm aboard the USS America remained the same or improved as operations progressed. The Army studied three two-man crews who flew a helicopter simulator for 14 hours a day for 4 days and 10 hours on the 5th day while sleeping four hours each night. Cognitive and judgmental errors were made, but pilots flew well into the 5th day. Interestingly, copilots were noted to increasingly fall asleep due to the boring nature of their duties and flight surgeons deemed the aviators unsafe to fly after the third night.
- Some skills are **easily degraded by fatigue**. These would include: **vigilance, judgement, situational awareness, or simply staying awake**.
- Of the many **things that affect performance** four stand out in military aviation:
    - **TYPE OF TASK** – Takeoff and landing skills are more fatigue resistant than maintaining vigilance
    - **PRELOAD** – How tired were you when you started
    - **TIME OF DAY** – Performance is best 1200 to 2100 and at a low 0300 to 0600
    - **AROUSAL** – What is happening during the flight.
    -
- All things being equal you will be more awake flying through AAA than flying circles in the tanker pattern.



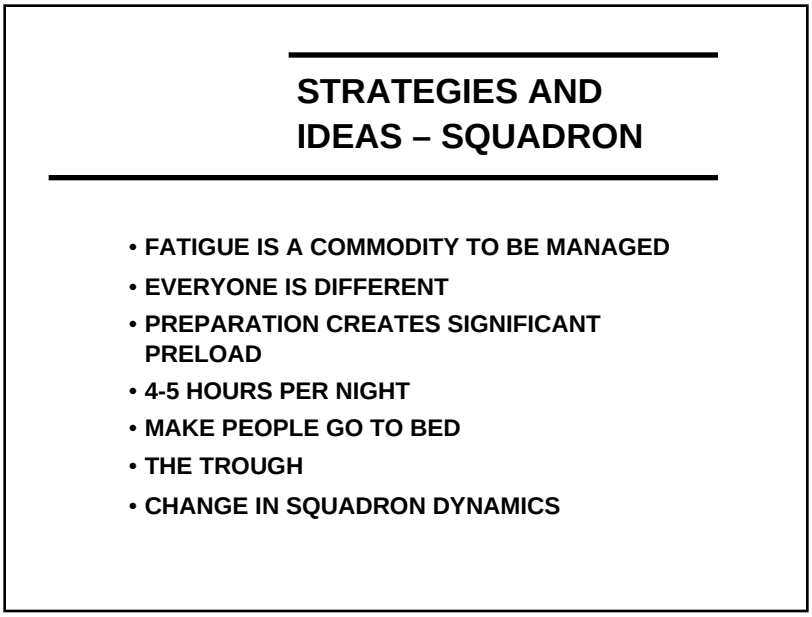
- An example of how fatigue affects performance is an already fatigued pilot flying an uneventful 7 hour combat air patrol (CAP) mission.
- On the left is shown how well he is performing in the face of fatigue: fully alert, less vigilant, performing tasks poorly, or actually falling asleep.
- As the mission progresses he does pretty well, except for the boring times on the CAP station which happen to fall in the major circadian trough of 0300 to 0600.
- While this represents only one possible mission profile, it shows how the type of task, preload, time of day and arousal can all combine to produce significant compromise of performance.
- Keep this profile in mind as we next discuss an F-15 squadron in Desert Storm and then the use of anti-fatigue medications.



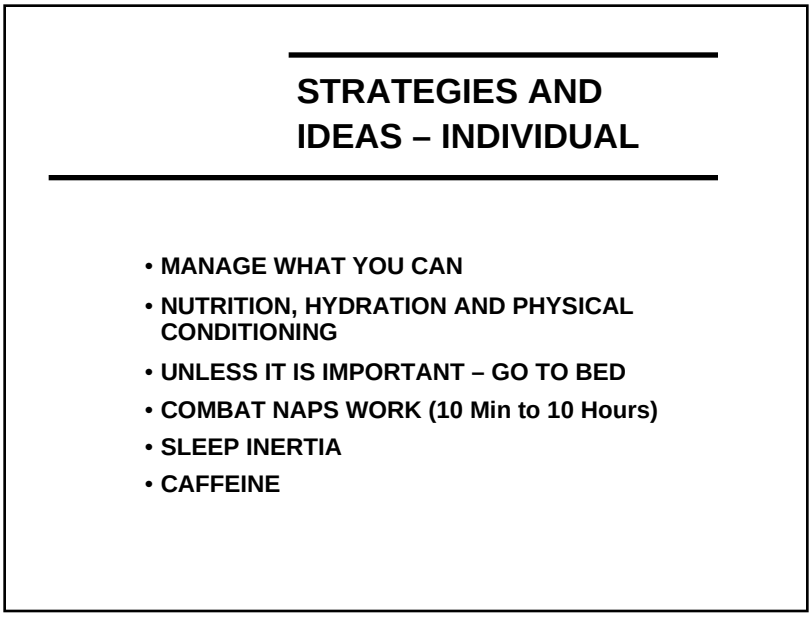
- Many Air Force squadrons used anti-fatigue medications during Desert Storm. We will focus on one.
- This **F-15 squadron** deployed flying to Saudi Arabia as part of Desert Shield with TRANSPAC flight lasting up to 16 hours non-stop. During Desert Storm they flew approximately 7000 hours in 1200 sorties using a pool of 35 pilots and shot down a total of 16 MIG aircraft. It is notable that the squadron had the fewest pilots assigned yet flew more flight hours and shot down more aircraft than any other F-15 squadron in-theater.
- The stimulant, described as the **"go-pill"**, was 5 mg Dexedrine (dextro-amphetamine). The recommended dose was one or two taken orally every 4 hours. As there is a 45-60 minute delay in onset of effect for the stimulant it was recommended that they use it when the early symptoms of fatigue. They were then given 4 to 6 Dexedrine tablets which were replaced as needed. In practice most aviators used a 5 mg dose, repeating it every 2-3 hours.
- The sedative was 15 or 30 mg or Restoril (temazepam) used as an aide for sleep and was called the **"no-go"** pill. While a 12 hour period of grounding was recommended pilots used this medication and began flight planning within 6-8 hours without reporting any adverse effects, including amnesia or "hangover" effect.
- The policy of the **commanding officer** was that all pilots would always fly with stimulant medication available, however, the **decision to use it** was left to the individual. Medication, once issued, was considered to "belong to the pilot."



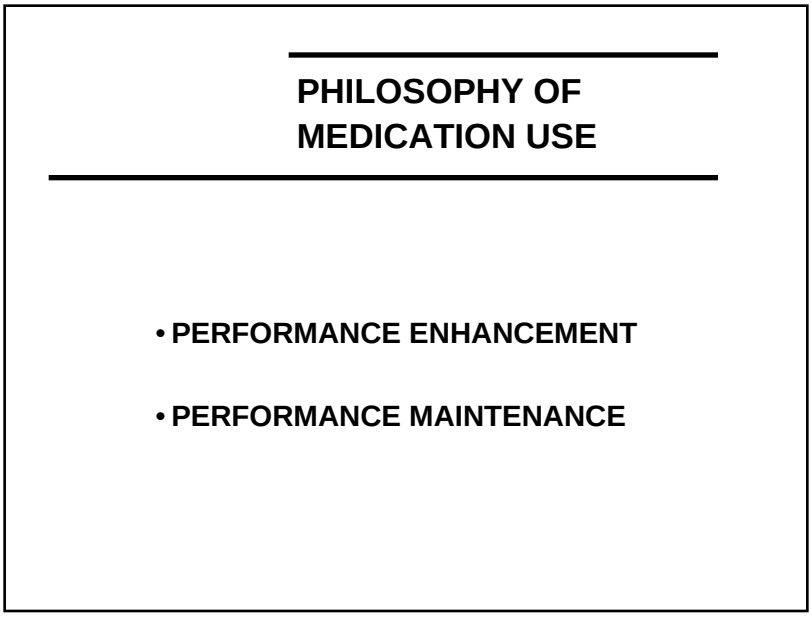
- While some took the go-pill outbound on missions with the thought that it would act as a performance enhancer the majority used the medication in the early morning hours **(0200 - sunrise)** or just after sunrise during extended combat air patrol (CAP) missions. If there was enemy activity staying alert was not a problem. For long periods during the war, however, the missions involved flying to a CAP station, circling, then returning to base for 7 hours of uneventful flight time.
- The **no-go pill was used less frequently** than the go pill. While based on an extremely limited and subjective sample, it appeared that the younger aviators favored the go-pills and the older ones the no-go pills.
- **No adverse reactions or abuse** were reported. A couple of pilots reported difficulty sleeping when they used the medication within an hour or so of landing. This was due to poor planning or in one case recall of the mission. Pilots quickly learned the characteristics of the stimulant and used it efficiently.
- Individual opinions of the pilots interviewed were either **positive or neutral**. None expressed a negative opinion regarding the availability or use of either drug. Several members were adamant that the squadron could not have maintained its level of flight operations without the medications they used. Those who didn't see any personal benefit still endorsed having it available for others in the squadron.
- Pilots were asked what it was like to take the stimulant. Most described struggling to stay awake in the cockpit and when the medication took effect it **"made you feel just like you do now."**



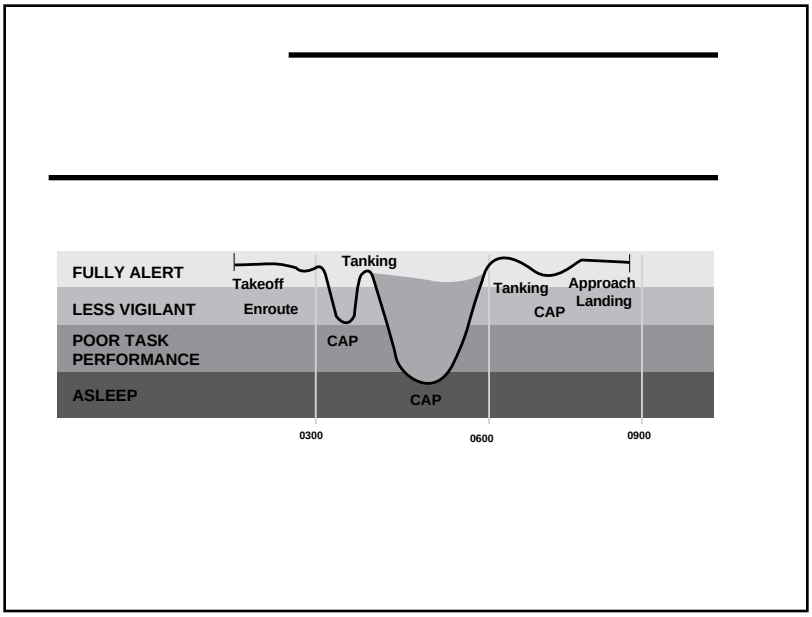
- Fatigue is a commodity to be managed. This policy/attitude must be established by squadron commanding officer.
- Everyone else's resistance to fatigue will rarely be the same as the airwing commander's (or anybody else's).
- Preparation/planning for a strike may be harder than the strike itself; don't make it harder than it needs to be.
- 4-5 hours of sleep per night is required for indefinite sustained operations. Fragmented sleep is less effective.
- Kick people out of the ready room and send them to bed; encourage combat naps.
- The low point of performance is in the early morning (0300-0600).
- A change is squadron dynamics, such as losing a sense of humor, is an early and reliable indicator of fatigue.



- Decide early to “manage” yourself. Be honest about your limitations; no one can sprint 26 miles.
- Pay attention to nutrition, hydration and physical conditioning.
- Exercise sleep discipline; unless it is really important go to bed.
- Combat naps work (even as short as 10 minutes). 10 hours is the maximum effective sleep period (even when sleep deprived). During the day it is easiest to get to sleep just after lunchtime (whether you ate or not).
- Many people are sluggish and confused for five to twenty minutes after taking a nap. This could be a problem when manning an alert aircraft.
- Caffeine works well to keep you awake – so remember to stop drinking coffee several hours before you want to sleep.



- When the topic of anti-fatigue medications and aviators is raised an unpleasant image commonly comes to mind. This is of an exhausted pilot who is too tired to fly but is given a high dose of stimulant and repeatedly launched into combat with the expectation that he will perform better than ever before. Although suffering insomnia and other side-effects from the stimulant this is overcome by repeated use of sedatives.
- This unfortunate scenario represents the extreme of an attempt at **"performance enhancement."** While limited enhancement may be achievable in the future the appropriate use of anti-fatigue medications today is in the role of **"performance maintenance."**
- Aviators already fly extremely well; the challenge is to identify when fatigue causes periods of degraded performance and then intervene only to maintain an existing level of capability.
- This intervention would take the form of helping the aviator sleep (thus preventing fatigue) or keeping him awake and alert during the low task phase of a mission.



- In summary, what do anti-fatigue medications buy us?
- Sedatives, potentially increase the amount of sleep. This either prevents or reduces fatigue that already exists.
- This diagram is the same one we saw earlier except that the effect or using a low dose stimulant is included.
- The aviator in this case was able to blunt a major decrease in his performance by using the medication at the first symptoms of fatigue. Once he moved beyond the major circadian trough between 0300 to 0600 he no longer needed any help.

QUESTIONS?

- You're on your own for this one.

PERFORMANCE MAINTENANCE DURING CONTINUOUS FLIGHT OPERATIONS

OUTLINE

- DEFINITIONS AND TOPICS
- USAF EXPERIENCE IN DESERT STORM
- STRATEGIES AND IDEAS
- PERFORMANCE MAINTENANCE VICE ENHANCEMENT
- ANTI-FATIGUE MEDICATIONS

OPERATIONS THAT PRODUCE FATIGUE

- **CONTINUOUS OPERATIONS**
  - **Extend over 24 Hours**
  - **Not Necessarily Longer Hours**
  - **Circadian Rhythm Conflict**
- **SUSTAINED OPERATIONS**
  - **Continuous Beyond 24 Hours**
  - **Work Until a Goal is Reached**
  - **Sleep Deprivation Common**

SLEEP

- PRELOAD
- TOTAL AMOUNT VS SPECIFIC STAGE
- COMBAT NAPS WORK
- SLEEP INERTIA
- EASIEST AFTER LUNCH
- 10 HOURS IS MAX EFFECTIVE PERIOD
- CAFFEINE

CIRCADIAN RHYTHMS

- **NUMEROUS CYCLIC RHYTHMS**
- **DESYNCHRONIZATION**
  - **External**
  - **Internal**
- **PERFORMANCE**
  - **Best 1200-2100**
  - **Worst 0300-0600**
- **7 DAYS TO ADJUST**

FATIGUE

ACUTE

- **Physical Exertion/Sleep Loss**
- **Alleviated by Single Rest Period**

CHRONIC

- **Medical or Psychological**

OPERATIONAL

- **Sleep Loss/Desynchronization**
- **Produced by Continuous Operations**
- **Seen After 3-4 Days**
- **Not Alleviated by a Single Rest Period**

PERFORMANCE

- **MANY SKILLS RESISTANT**

  T/O, Landing, Rendezvous, Bombing, Etc.

- **SOME EASILY DEGRADED**

  Vigilance, Judgement, Situational Awareness, Staying Awake

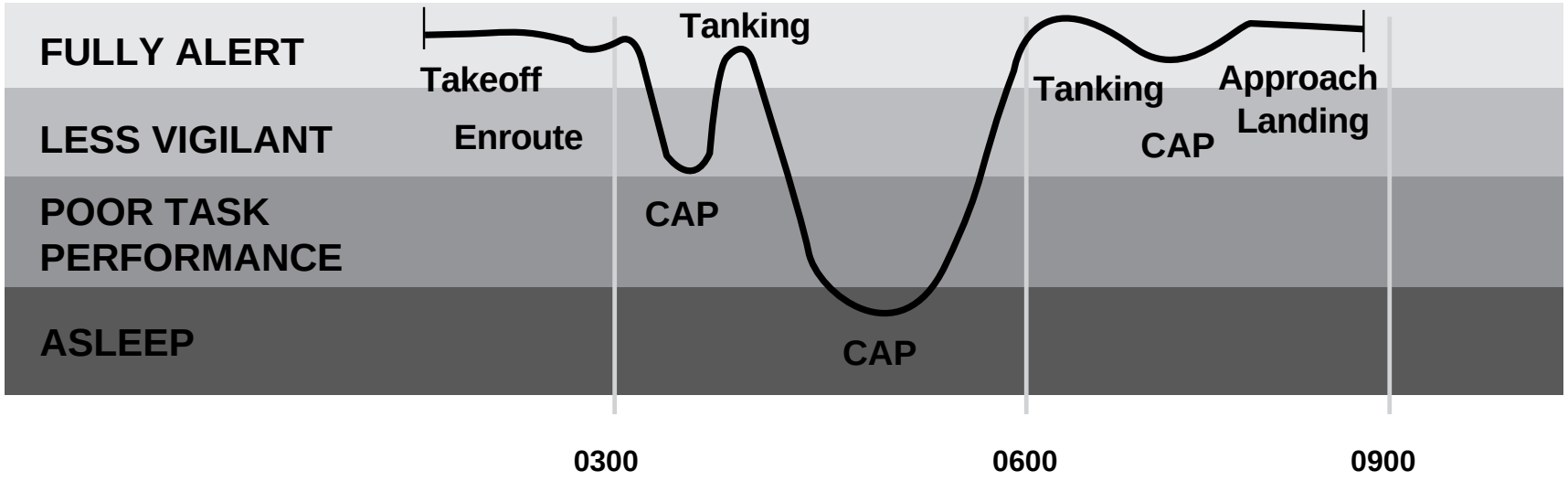
- **PERFORMANCE DETERMINED BY:**

  Type of Task

  Preload

  Time of Day

  Arousal


FULLY ALERT
LESS VIGILANT
POOR TASK PERFORMANCE
ASLEEP
Takeoff
Enroute
Tanking
CAP
CAP
Tanking
CAP
Approach
Landing
0300
0600
0900

USAF EXPERIENCE IN DESERT STORM

- **F-15 SQUADRON**
  - **35 Pilots, 1200 Sorties, 7000 Hours**
  - **16 MIG Kills**
- **MEDICATION**
  - **Go-Pill (5 mg Dexedrine)**
  - **No-Go Pill (15-30 mg Restoril)**
- **CO REQUIRED GO-PILL IN A/C**
- **DECISION DELEGATED TO PILOTS**

USAF EXPERIENCE (CONTINUED)

- STIMULANT USED 0200-SUNRISE
- SEDATIVE USED LESS
- NO ADVERSE REACTIONS OR ABUSE
- PILOT OPINIONS NEUTRAL TO POSITIVE
- "MADE YOU FEEL JUST LIKE YOU DO NOW"

STRATEGIES AND IDEAS – SQUADRON

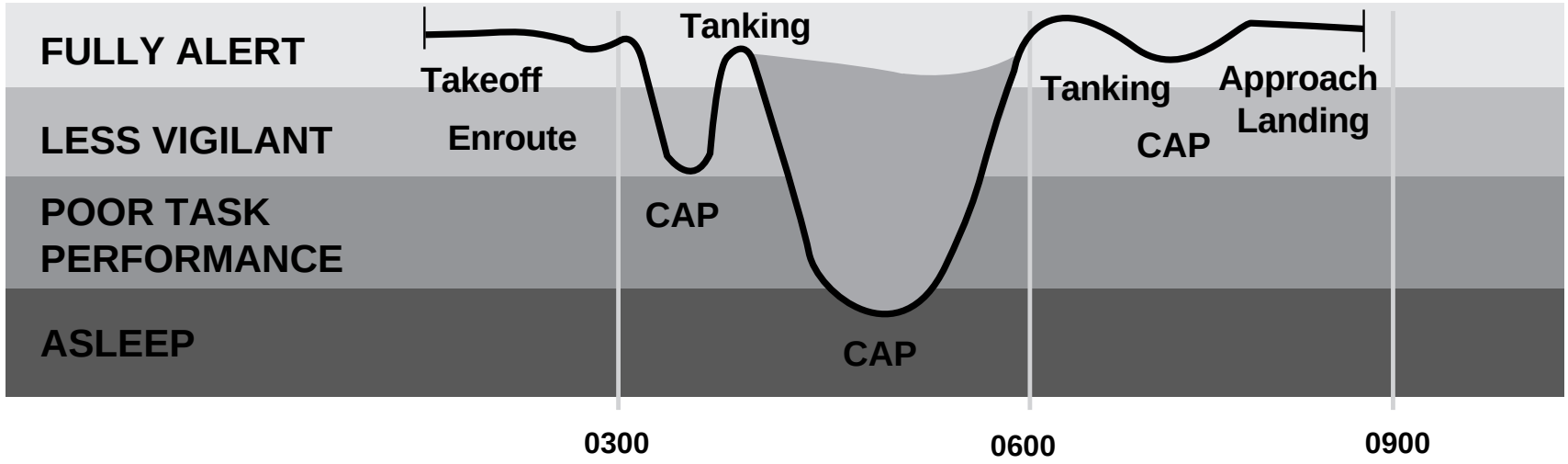
- FATIGUE IS A COMMODITY TO BE MANAGED
- EVERYONE IS DIFFERENT
- PREPARATION CREATES SIGNIFICANT PRELOAD
- 4-5 HOURS PER NIGHT
- MAKE PEOPLE GO TO BED
- THE TROUGH
- CHANGE IN SQUADRON DYNAMICS

STRATEGIES AND IDEAS – INDIVIDUAL

- MANAGE WHAT YOU CAN
- NUTRITION, HYDRATION AND PHYSICAL CONDITIONING
- UNLESS IT IS IMPORTANT – GO TO BED
- COMBAT NAPS WORK (10 Min to 10 Hours)
- SLEEP INERTIA
- CAFFEINE

PHILOSOPHY OF MEDICATION USE

- **PERFORMANCE ENHANCEMENT**
- **PERFORMANCE MAINTENANCE**


FULLY ALERT
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0300
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QUESTIONS?